UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/54/71
S/1999/272
12 March 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-fourth session
Items 30 and 76 of the preliminary list*
COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 12 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement of 12 March 1999 by the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the problem of the expansion of NATO (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the agenda items entitled "General and complete disarmament" and "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sergei LAVROV

* A/54/50.

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ANNEX

STATEMENT OF 12 MARCH 1999 BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Today, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic officially joined the North Atlantic Alliance. In this connection, we should like to stress that the Russian Federation's position with regard to the expansion of NATO has not changed and remains negative. Expanding the North Atlantic Alliance will not further the strengthening of trust and stability in international relations and, on the contrary, may give rise to new dividing lines. We would not want such a development, and it is not in the interests of the peoples of our continent.

For its part, the Russian Federation has put forward and proposes, as a constructive alternative to expansion, stepping up work on creating a European security architecture that would ensure the interests of all States without exception, both those that are members of one or another military-political alliance as well as those that are not. We believe that the establishment of a reliable system for European security and stability is possible only on a common European basis with unswerving observance of international law and by making use of the potential of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as the most representative and universal common European organization capable of dealing with all the challenges of the twenty-first century - political, economic, military and humanitarian ones. We call upon all the countries concerned to draw up as speedily as possible and adopt at this year's OSCE summit in November a charter for European security - a weighty document that would develop and concretize the vision of a single space for democracy and security, contain practical agreements on the principles governing the European security architecture, mutual relations and cooperation between European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

The question of adapting the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) has become particularly important now after the expansion of NATO. The Russian side believes that the obligation undertaken by the States parties to the Treaty to complete by the end of March work on the key aspects of adapting it to new conditions will be carried out and this very important instrument for stability will maintain its effectiveness.

The Russian side will also continue its active work to make use of the potential of the Founding Act and the Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council in order to create relations based on true partnership between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Alliance and prevent any detriment to the work of forming a single Euro-Atlantic space for stability, democracy and cooperation without dividing lines. We are counting on understanding and reciprocal action on the part of our partners. Only this process, and not a relapse into the logic of the "cold war", can ensure peace and prosperity.